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The Abode of God

John 14.22-25

Series: Signs of Life

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I. Introduction

- A. This past week I found myself cleaning the ceiling fans on our lanai
 - 1. I don't do that every day
 - a. Or every week
 - b. Or very often at all
- B. Jean and I have somewhat different philosophies regarding ceiling fan cleaning
 - 1. The ceiling fans on our lanai are white
 - a. At least they're supposed to be
 - b. And they definitely needed cleaning
 - 2. But I've noticed that if ceiling fans are running, you really can't tell if they're dirty
 - a. So I figure, why don't we just let them run all the time?
 - 3. As you might imagine, Jean's philosophy on ceiling fans is a bit different
 - a. So I ended up cleaning them this past week
- C. I've noticed as well that some things like ceiling fans get cleaned when we are getting ready to have house guests
 - 1. Have you found the same kind of thing?
 - a. That when you are about to host house guests, you end up cleaning things that aren't normally on your cleaning rotation?
 - 2. And that's what's happening with us
 - a. We are having some house guests this week
 - 3. What kinds of things do you clean when you are having house guests?
- D. And if you are expecting house guests this week, what would you think you would want to clean?
 - 1. And what if the house guest you were expecting was God?
 - a. What would you clean?
 - b. Would you clean anything different than you would if your guest were someone else?
- E. And what would happen if your guest was God, but He wasn't going to stay in your house
 - 1. And wouldn't be all that interested in ceiling fans
 - 2. But what if He was instead going to stay in you
 - a. That is, in your heart
 - b. And that He was going to stay a while
 - c. Maybe, like, forever
 - 3. What would you want to clean up in your heart?

- F. That is the sense of a classic essay by Robert Boyd Munger
1. In 1951 he published an essay entitled *My Heart – Christ’s Home*
 2. **Ephesians 3:16–17** (NASB95) — 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...
 - a. Or, alternatively, “That Christ may settle down and be at home in your hearts by faith.”
 3. He speaks of the time he invited Christ into his heart
 - a. “He came into the darkness of my heart and turned on the light. He built a fire in the cold hearth and banished the chill. He started music where that had been stillness, and He filled the emptiness with His own loving, wonderful fellowship.”
 4. And then, to welcome Christ into his heart, he gave Him a guided tour, as it were
 - a. You know, much like we would give to house guests who have never been to our homes
 5. He took Jesus into his library or study which was the primary residence of his mind
 - a. And he was surprised to find himself embarrassed about some of the things that occupied his mind
 - b. Things that needed to be cleaned
 6. He took Jesus into his dining room – the place of his appetites and desires
 - a. Actually served Jesus some of his favorite fare
 - b. And he was surprised to discovered that not all that he served was all that appealing to Jesus
 - c. There was a great deal to change in the dining room
 - d. And some new tastes, some new appetites, needed to be acquired
 7. He took Jesus into the living room, a place of friendship and fellowship
 - a. It was a place where he fully expected to be with Jesus
 - b. But as time went on, he discovered that while Jesus was there waiting for him every morning, any number of things – the pressure of various responsibilities and obligations – would prevent him from spending the time necessary to grow in his fellowship with Jesus
 8. Jesus asked him about a workroom – a place where he had intended to create things, useful things; things which would contribute to the mission and ministry
 - a. But he hadn’t really used the workroom all that much
 - b. He had all the tools; and he knew what to do with them
 - c. But he really hadn’t been all that useful
 9. Then Jesus asked him about his rec room
 - a. The rec room – the place of activities, amusements and entertainments
 - b. The place where he would hang out with his friends
 - c. He actually hadn’t wanted Jesus to see his rec room
 - d. He wasn’t sure Jesus would approve of his amusements or his

I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 “If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.”

- a. Incredible promise in prayer
- b. That if we ask in His name – submitting ourselves to His will
- c. And that if we seek always the glory of the Father
- d. Jesus will answer the prayer
- e. What a promise!

3. Promises the Holy Spirit

- a. **John 14:16–17** (NASB95) — 16 “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.
- b. Jesus is leaving – but not really!
- c. Jesus is coming by His Spirit – to be with us

4. Self-disclosure

- a. **John 14:21** (NASB95) — 21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”
- b. We will know Jesus; He will reveal Himself to us

5. Incredible promises

IV. **Greatest Promise of All**

- A. But then Judas – not Iscariot; not the one who betrayed Jesus – follows that last promise with a question
- B. **John 14:22** (NASB95) — 22 ... “Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?”
 1. “Why do we get this wonderful revelation of Your self, but not them, not the world”
- C. That’s when Jesus gives what is perhaps the greatest promise of all
 1. Greatest because it is truly life-transforming
- D. **John 14:23** (NASB95) — 23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”
 1. “We will come to him and **make our abode** with him”
 - a. “We will take up residence in the believer”
 - b. “We will be his house guests”
- E. Abode
 1. Same word used in John 14.2: “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places...”
 - a. Dwelling places = abode
 - b. Then He promises to prepare one of them for you
 2. Jesus is saying, “There are many homes in heaven. I’m going to make one just for you... but in the meantime, you will make one just for Me and for My Father”

- a. “And We will come and live with you in your abode”
 - F. This idea of God dwelling in the believer was hard for the disciples to understand
 - 1. It’s not that the Holy Spirit was absent from the Old Covenant people of God
 - 2. The Holy Spirit was present in the Creation
 - a. Present with the Patriarchs
 - b. Present with Israel during wilderness wanderings
 - c. Present with Moses
 - d. Present with the leaders of Israel as the Spirit that was on Moses was distributed to the elders who would assist in the ministry
 - e. Present with the craftsmen who constructed the tabernacle
 - f. Present with the prophets – Elisha asked for an extra measure of the Spirit that Elijah had
 - g. Present with David: “Take not your Holy Spirit from me”
 - 3. But the idea that the Holy Spirit would indwell each and every believer was an entirely new concept for these Jewish believers
 - G. And until Pentecost, I’m not sure they really got it!
 - 1. And I’m not sure we really get it
 - 2. When Pastor Don likes to say, “Good morning, Church,” he’s reminding us all that we believers are the church”
 - a. We’re not coming to church
 - b. We are the church
 - 3. In other words, we not coming to this place to meet Jesus
 - a. We’re bringing Jesus with us
 - 4. We don’t come to the sanctuary to worship
 - a. We bring the sanctuary with us
 - 5. We are the home of the triune God
 - a. The abode of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
 - H. Once we understand that – it will be life-transforming
 - 1. What a promise!
 - a. **John 14:23** (NASB95) — 23 ... “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”
- V. **A Promise with Conditions**
 - A. But it is a promise with conditions
 - 1. “If anyone loves Me...”
 - 2. “He will keep My word”
 - B. Two conditions
 - 1. **Love**
 - 2. **Obedience to the commands of Christ**
 - C. How do we come to love Jesus?
 - 1. First, we love Him because He first loved us
 - a. **1 John 4:19** (NASB95) — 19 We love, because He first loved us.
 - b. **1 John 4:10** (NASB95) — 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation

- for our sins.
 - c. **John 3:16** (NASB95) — 16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”
 - 2. God is the initiator of love
 - a. We love because He loved us first
 - 3. And He didn’t wait to love us until we straightened ourselves out!
 - a. **Romans 5:8** (NASB95) — 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
 - b. We were most unlovely; yet He loved us
 - c. Enough to die for us
 - 4. And our love is fueled by forgiveness
 - a. Remember the woman who wept over Jesus, cleansing His feet with her tears
 - b. **Luke 7:47** (NASB95) — 47 “For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”
 - 5. When we understand how much we have been forgiven in Jesus, our love for Him blossoms, indeed, explodes!
- D. But the Christian life does not separate love and obedience
 - 1. **John 14:21** (NASB95) — 21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me...”
 - 2. **John 14:15** (NASB95) — 15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”
 - 3. **1 John 5:3** (NASB95) — 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.
 - 4. What commandments?
 - a. Remember John 13
 - b. **John 13:34–35** (NASB95) — 34 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
 - c. Same chapter Jesus washed the disciples’ feet – serving them
 - d. **John 13:15** (NASB95) — 15 “For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.”
 - e. Not just washing feet – but serving one another
- E. That’s really what happens after we become Christians
 - 1. After God in Christ initiated love
 - a. After the Holy Spirit quickened us to embrace Christ
 - b. After we have been born again
 - 2. And we grow in our love for Christ
 - a. And we grow in our obedience for Christ
 - 3. Then we experience the fellowship of the Triune God
 - a. Living in the abode of God
 - b. Living in our hearts

- F. That's when we start to clean house – Robert Munger
1. Library, the study, the mind
 - a. Jesus tells him: “First of all, take all the things that you are reading and looking at which are not helpful, pure, good and true, and throw them out! Now put on the empty shelves the books of the Bible. Fill the library with Scriptures and meditate on them day and night.
 - b. “As for the pictures on the walls, you will have difficulty controlling these images, but here is an aid.”
 - c. He says, “He gave me a full-size portrait of Himself. ‘Hang this centrally,’ He said, ‘on the wall of the mind.’”
 - d. Munger writes, “I did, and I have discovered through the years that when my thoughts are centered upon Christ Himself, His purity and power cause impure thoughts to back away. So He has helped me to bring my thoughts into captivity.”
 2. The dining room, the place of appetites and desires
 - a. Jesus told him, “I have meat to eat that you do not know of. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.”... “If you want food that really satisfies you, seek the will of the Father, not your own pleasures, not your own desires, and not your own satisfaction. Seek to please Me and that food will satisfy you.”
 - b. Munger: “And there at the table He gave me a taste of doing God’s will. What a flavor! There is no food like it in all the world. It alone satisfies. Everything else is dissatisfying in the end.”
 3. The living room – the place of comfortable fellowship and intimacy
 - a. Jesus told him: “The trouble with you is this: you have been thinking of the quiet time, of the bible study and prayer time, as a factor in your own spiritual progress, but you have forgotten that this hour means something to Me also. Remember, I love you. I have redeemed you at great cost. I value your fellowship. Now do not neglect this hour if only for My sake. Whatever else may be your desire, remember I want your fellowship!”
 - b. Munger: “... the truth that Christ desires my companionship, that He loves me, wants me to be with Him, wants to be with me and waits for me, has done more to transform my quiet time with God than any other single fact.”
 4. The workroom – place of usefulness in the ministry
 - a. Jesus told him: “Let me have your hands. Now relax in me and let My Spirit work through you. I know that you are unskilled, clumsy and awkward, but the Holy Spirit is the Master-Worker, and if He controls your hands and your heart, He will work through you.”
 5. The rec room – place of amusement and entertainment and leisure
 - a. Munger: “He went down into the playroom of the house and He transformed it. He brought into life real joy, real happiness, real satisfaction, new friends, new excitement, new joys. Laughter and

- music have been ringing through the house ever since.”
6. And then the hall closet – the place that stinks with the residue of death from the old life
 - a. The stuff that we’re reluctant to give up
 - b. Munger: “I was angry. That’s the only way I can put it. I had given Him access to the library, the dining room, the living room, the workroom, the playroom, and now He was asking me about a little two-by-four closet. I said to myself, ‘This is too much. I am not going to give Him the key.’”
 - c. Jesus: “Well... if you think I’m going to stay up here... with this odor, you are mistaken. I will take my bed out on the back porch. I’m certainly not going to put up with that.”
 - d. Munger: “Then I saw Him start down the stairs. When you have come to know and love Christ, the worst thing that can happen is to sense His fellowship retreating from you. I had to surrender. ‘I’ll give You the key... but You’ll have to open the closet and clean it out. I haven’t the strength to do it.’”
 - e. Jesus: “I know you haven’t. Just give Me the key. Just authorize me to take care of that closet and I will.”
 - f. Munger: “He took the key from my hand, walked over to the door, opened it, entered it, took out all the putrefying stuff that was rotting there and threw it away. Then He cleaned the closet, painted it, fixed it up, doing it all in a moment’s time. Oh, what victory and release to have that dead thing out of my life!”

VI. **Who Owns the Home?**

- A. But there was one more element in recognizing that the Triune God wants to make His abode in our hearts
 1. That is the ownership of the home itself
- B. Munger: “I have been trying to keep this heart of mine clear for Christ. I start on one room and no sooner have I cleaned that then another room is dirty. I begin on the second room and the first room becomes dusty again. I am so tired and weary trying to maintain a clean heart and an obedient life. I am just not up to it!”
 1. “Lord, is there any chance that You would take over the responsibility of the whole house and operate it for me and with me just as You did that closet? Would You take the responsibility to keep my heart what it ought to be and my life where it ought to be?”
- C. Jesus: “Certainly, that is what I came to do. You cannot be a victorious Christian in your own strength. That is impossible. Let me do it through you and for you.”
 1. “But... I am not owner of this house. I am just a guest. I have no authority to proceed, since the property is not mine.”
- D. Munger: “I saw it in a minute and dropping to my knees, I said, ‘Lord, You have been a guest and I have been the host. From now on I am going to be the servant. You are going to be the owner and Master and Lord.’”
 1. “I took out the title deed... I eagerly signed it over to belong to Him alone for time and eternity. ‘Here it is, all that I am and have forever, now You

run the house. I'll just remain with You as a servant and friend.”

- E. **John 14:23** (NASB95) — 23 ... “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”
 - 1. The most life-transforming promise is realized when we invite the Father and the Son by the Holy Spirit to make our hearts the abode of God
- F. And when we do, He becomes more than a house guest
 - 1. He becomes the owner
- G. Who occupies your heart?
 - 1. Indeed, who owns your heart?
 - a. And how will your heart be cleansed and transformed for the resident within?